



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

NAVAL HEALTH CARE NEW ENGLAND
43 SMITH ROAD
NEWPORT RI 02841-1002

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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March 1, 2006

Dear TRICARE Beneficiary:

The Naval Health Care New England (NHCNE) team is committed to providing you and your family with timely and quality pharmaceutical care and medication information. In an effort to standardize policies and procedures throughout the Military Health System, NHCNE pharmacies will begin utilizing a preferred medication list or formulary.

Effective June 1, 2006, NHCNE will modify its formulary to include a preferred medication list. Medications are selected for this preferred medication list based upon standard-of-care, therapeutic effectiveness, prescription volume, and economics (cost). The content is determined by both the Department of Defense and the local NHCNE Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committees.

NHCNE's preferred medication list will be available over the internet at the NHCNE website: <http://nhcne.med.navy.mil/pharmacy/formulary.asp>. Additionally, at your request, a hard-copy of this preferred medication list may be obtained at a NHCNE pharmacy or may be mailed directly to you or your health care provider. We recommend that prior to coming to the pharmacy, you or your provider contact your preferred NHCNE pharmacy location to determine if an item is carried on our preferred medication list.

If you are affected by the change to our preferred medication list, you will be provided with one last refill, up to a 90-day supply of the medication. A lesser supply may be provided if your health care provider indicated this on your original prescription. When you are given your last refill, you will be provided a list of therapeutic alternatives that your provider may consider.

Additionally, alternative TRICARE Pharmacy benefit options do exist for those beneficiaries who cannot be converted to a formulary item or if conversion is deemed inappropriate by their health care provider. Upon request, you may receive information outlining these alternative pharmacy benefits options; the TRICARE Retail Pharmacy network (TRRx) and the TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy (TMOP).

Also, if you are enrolled to a NCHNE facility (Naval Ambulatory Care Center Groton, Naval Ambulatory Care Center Newport, Naval Branch Health Clinic Brunswick, Naval Branch Health Clinic Portsmouth or Naval Branch Health Clinic Saratoga Springs) the pharmacy will obtain non-formulary medications after your provider has validated medical necessity and completed the appropriate special order procedures. This special order policy also applies to civilian prescriptions written for you if you were referred out from NCHNE for specialty care.

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March 1, 2006

I appreciate your understanding of this matter and remain committed to providing you the highest possible quality of health care.

Sincerely,

P. J. GOODIN
Captain, Nurse Corps
United States Navy
Commanding Officer

Enclosure: 1. Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why is NHCNE returning to a formulary?

A: In response to a directive from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs (HA Policy 04-032, dated December 22, 2004), all military pharmacies (including NHCNE) are required to operate an effective, efficient, integrated pharmacy benefits program. In an effort to standardize policies between the many facets of the military health system, NHCNE pharmacies will begin utilizing a preferred medication list or formulary.

Q: What is a formulary?

A: A formulary is simply a list of pharmaceutical products (medications and related supplies) that are carried at a facility and are designed to meet the prescribing needs of the providers at that facility. Medications are selected for formulary inclusion based upon standard-of-care, therapeutic effectiveness, prescription volume, and economics (cost).

Q: Who determines what medications are on the formulary?

A: Formulary status is determined by both the Department of Defense and the local Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committees. The Department of Defense has established a Basic Core Formulary on which our formulary will be based.

Q: What is the Basic Core Formulary?

A: The Department of Defense Basic Core Formulary (BCF) was officially established on April 27, 1998 by HA Policy 98-034. The BCF is a list of medications that are required to be on all military treatment facility (MTF) formularies. Medications selected for the BCF offer clinical and/or economic advantages over competing agents. BCF agents are intended to meet the majority of primary care needs of military health system (MHS) beneficiaries.

Q: What is a Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee?

A: The Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee is a multi-disciplinary group of health care providers (physicians, dentists, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners), nurses and pharmacists that monitor and evaluate the use of medications within an institution. One of the responsibilities of the P&T Committee is to develop, monitor, and maintain the facility's formulary.

Q: How do I know what medication is on the formulary?

A: NHCNE's formulary will be made available on the internet and will be posted at <http://nhcne.med.navy.mil/pharmacy/formulary.asp>. You or your health care provider may request a hard-copy of the formulary. One may be picked up in person or mailed directly. It is recommended that prior to coming to a NHCNE pharmacy, you or your health care provider refer to the formulary or contact a NHCNE pharmacy to determine if an item is carried.

Q: What if my medication is not on the formulary?

A: If you are affected by the change in our formulary, you will be provided one last refill or up

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to a 90-day supply of the medication. A lesser supply may be provided if directed by your health care provider on the original prescription. You will be provided a list of available therapeutic alternatives that your health care provider may wish to consider.

Q: As a Prime beneficiary, can my Primary Care Manager special order medications not on the formulary?

A: The pharmacy will obtain non-formulary medications after your provider has validated medical necessity and completed the appropriate special order procedures. This special order policy also applies to civilian prescriptions written for you if you were referred out from NCHNE for specialty care.

Q: What if my health care provider does not want to switch me to an alternative medication?

A: For those patients who do not want to be converted to a formulary medication or if conversion is deemed inappropriate by their health care provider, the beneficiary (if eligible) may use the alternative pharmacy benefits options; TRICARE Retail Pharmacy network (TRRx) and TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy (TMOP).

Q: What are the TRICARE Pharmacy options?

A: Your local military treatment facility (MTF) is your best option for obtaining pharmaceuticals. However, for those medications not carried on an MTF's formulary or by personal preference, eligible beneficiaries may use the TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy (TMOP) or a network TRICARE Retail Pharmacy (TRRx). More information regarding TMOP and TRRx is available at your local MTF, at www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE or at 1-866-363-8667 (DOD-TMOP) or 1-866-363-8779 (DOD-TRRX). Please note that using TMOP or TRRx will incur a small pharmacy co-payment. For co-payment amounts please refer to <http://tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/copay.cfm> or ask your local MTF pharmacy representative.

Q: How can I contact a NHCNE pharmacy?

A: You may submit questions to the NHCNE Pharmacy Program Manager or NHCNE pharmacy Storefront Managers three different ways:

Via the internet: webmaster@nhcne.med.navy.mil

By mail: Naval Health Care New England
Attn: Pharmacy Program Manager
43 Smith Road
Newport, RI 02841-1002

By telephone: Groton, CT (860) 694-4523
Newport, RI (401) 841-2224
Portsmouth, NH (207) 438-2582
Brunswick, ME (207) 921-1620
Saratoga Springs, NY (518) 583-5306